ANGEL & FAITH™

A TALE of TWO FAMILIES

VICTOR GISCHLER WILL CONRAD

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JOSS WHEDON

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SEASON 10 · VOLUME 5

A TALE of TWO FAMILIES

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DARK HORSE BOOKS

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER: MIKE RICHARDSON · SERIES EDITORS: FREDDYE MILLER & JIM GIBBONS · ASSISTANT EDITOR: SPENCER CUSHING · COLLECTION DESIGNER: JUSTIN COUCH · DIGITAL ART TECHNICIAN: CHRISTIANNE GOUDREAU

Special thanks to Nicole Spiegel *and* Josh Izzo *at Twentieth Century Fox,* Daniel Kaminsky, *and* Scott Allie.

Art on page 2 is the variant cover for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #25, by Mike Norton with colors by Michelle Madsen.

This story takes place after the events in *Angel & Faith* Season 9, created by Joss Whedon.

DARKHORSE.COM

First print edition: August 2016
Digital ISBN 978-1-62115-901-8

Published by Dark Horse Books, a division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222

ANGEL & FAITH SEASON 10 VOLUME 5: A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES
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This volume reprints the comic book series *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #21–#25, from Dark Horse Comics.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Gischler, Victor, 1969- author. | Conrad, Will, illustrator. | Madsen, Michelle (Illustrator), illustrator. | Starkings, Richard, illustrator. | Betancourt, Jimmy, illustrator. | Fischer, Scott M., illustrator. | Whedon, Joss, 1964- producer.
Title: Angel & Faith. Season 10. Volume 5, A tale of two families / script, Victor Gischler ; art, Will Conrad ; colors, Michelle Madsen ; letters, Richard Starkings & Comicraft's Jimmy Betancourt ; cover and chapter break art, Scott Fischer ; executive producer, Joss Whedon.
Other titles: Tale of two families
Description: First edition. | Milwaukie, OR : Dark Horse Books, 2016.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016015656 | ISBN 9781616559656 (paperback)
Subjects: LCSH: Vampires--Comic books, strips, etc. | BISAC: COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS / Fantasy. | GSAFD: Comic books, strips, etc.
Classification: LCC PN6728.A543 G63 2016 | DDC 741.5/973--dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016015656

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RESIDENCE OF NILES WEATHERFORD.

IT'S BEEN UTTERLY FASCINATING, BRENDA.

YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK IT'S THE WORK OF A SINGLE ARTISAN. I THINK A *TEAM* CREATED THE STATUE, LIKE THE BRONZE WORKERS ALL-STARS OR SOMETHING. *HA HA.* IT WOULD EXPLAIN ALL OF THE INFLUENCES--ASIAN, MIDDLE EASTERN, ETC.

ANYWAY, PLEASE THANK EVERYONE AT THE MUSEUM FOR ME. I KNOW IT WAS A BOTHER BRINGING THE THING TO MY HOME, BUT YOU KNOW HOW I AM. BIT RECLUSIVE IN MY OLD AGE. YES, I'LL CALL YOU IF I DISCOVER ANYTHING NEW. TOODLES.

A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

PART ONE

DING DONG

HMM?

YES? WHAT IS IT?

GOOD EVENING, SIR. I'M *TERRIBLY* SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, BUT MY AUTOMOBILE SEEMS TO BE MISBEHAVING.

MAY I COME IN FOR A MOMENT TO USE YOUR PHONE AND--

SORRY. I'M A VERY PRIVATE PERSON. NOBODY COMES IN EXCEPT MY DAUGHTER, AND *SHE'S* ON HOLIDAY WITH HER MOTHER. THE TOBACCONIST AROUND THE CORNER WILL LET YOU USE THE PHONE.

GOOD EVENING.

SLAMM

THE OL' CODGER DON'T LIKE VISITORS, EH? LORD ARCHAEUS WON'T BE PLEASED.

JUST *DRIVE,* MY VICIOUS LITTLE ROSE PETAL.

MUMMY WILL FIGURE ANOTHER WAY.

PLEASE! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

HAHA HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHA

HEY!

SNAGGED THE LITTLE BLIGHTER.

SHOULDN'T WANDER ALONE AT NIGHT, BOY. SOON THERE WILL BE A *NEW* MASTER RUNNING THIS TOWN, AND--

THWIP

WHAT THE BLOODY--?!

UH, TRICIA, DARLING, RELOAD THE CROSSBOW *FASTER* PLEASE!

DON'T *YELL*. I CAN'T DO IT IF YOU'RE YELLING.

FIRST WE GRAB THEM. THEN WE *DRAIN* THEM.

REMEMBER, TRICIA, YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE AT A SURPRISE SHOT WITH A CROSSBOW. SO MAKE IT COUNT.

THEY'RE SLOW AS HELL TO RELOAD.

FWAP

GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME, YOU SON OF A--

AND TACKLE THEM TWO ON ONE IF YOU GET THE CHANCE. THE NEW VAMPS HAVE SKIN LIKE RHINO HIDE.

DON'T TRY TO BE A HERO.

PAFT

PAFT

PAFT

DON'T WORRY, ANGEL AND I WILL KEEP DOING THE PATROLS FOR NOW.

YEAH, WE WON'T ASK YOU TO DO ANY OF THE HEAVY LIFTING YET. I'LL DEFINITELY BE AROUND TO MAKE SURE THESE JOKERS DON'T HURT ANY INNOCENTS.

THAT ONE'S GETTING AWAY.

IT'S OKAY. ALL PART OF THE PLAN.

OH?

I DIDN'T DO A *BLOODY THING* TO HELP.

IT'S OUR *FIRST TIME,* PARKER.

AT LEAST *YOU* SHOT ONE IN THE SHOULDER.

IT'LL TAKE PRACTICE. LOOK, I KNOW A GUY BACK IN SAN FRANCISCO NAMED *XANDER,* AND IF *HE* CAN LEARN TO--

THE *POINT* IS THAT ANGEL OR I MIGHT NOT ALWAYS BE AROUND, AND IT'S GOOD TO START LEARNING THE ROPES.

I TRIED TO ROUND UP MORE THAN JUST ME AND TRICIA, BUT... WELL...PEOPLE ARE *AFRAID.*

UNDERSTANDABLE.

THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TONIGHT.

COME ON, ANGEL. EVERYONE SHOULD BE GATHERED BY NOW.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY-- DO YOU THINK HE HEARD YOU?

I *THINK* SO.

AND THAT ACCOMPLISHES...?

HERE'S THE THEORY, FRED. ARCHAEUS HAS BEEN SENDING GROUPS OF VAMPIRES INTO MAGIC TOWN TO KICK UP DUST AND RUN US AROUND IN CIRCLES. HE'S KEEPING US ON ***DEFENSE***.

I MADE SURE THE ESCAPED VAMP HEARD I WAS STICKING CLOSE TO MAGIC TOWN TO PATROL. BASICALLY WHAT THEY WANT.

HERE'S THE ***OTHER*** PART OF THE THEORY. IF ARCHAEUS THINKS HE'S SUCCEEDED IN PINNING ANGEL DOWN HERE, THEN MAYBE HE'LL EASE UP WITH THE VAMP HIT-'N'-RUN STRIKES ON MAGIC TOWN.

I MEAN, WHY ALLOW ANY MORE OF HIS GROUND TROOPS TO GET DUSTED IF IT'S ALREADY MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, RIGHT?

SO WE ***DO NOT*** PATROL MAGIC TOWN. THAT LEAVES US FREE TO GO AFTER ARCHAEUS AND RESCUE NADIRA-- A ***RISK***, BUT A GOOD ONE.

ALMOST.

I ***AM*** GOING TO PATROL. MOSTLY JUST SO I CAN BE SEEN AROUND TOWN AND KEEP UP THE RUSE. I MEAN, IF WE'RE ***ALL*** GONE, IT MIGHT RAISE SUSPICIONS.

FAITH, I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO, BUT I THINK WE NEED TO SLOW THIS DOWN AND THINK IT THROUGH.

YEAH, UH, WE ***DID*** DISCUSS. IT'S ***BEEN*** THOUGHT THROUGH.

I KNOW. I'VE BEEN RECONSIDERING. I KNOW WE WANT TO ROLL THE DICE HERE, BUT LIKE KOH SAID, IT'S A *RISK.* SOMEBODY NEEDS TO STAY HOME AND MIND THE STORE, AND MAGIC TOWN... THEY KNOW ME AROUND HERE. THEY'LL FEEL SAFER.

KOH AND I HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW FOLKS AROUND HERE PRETTY WELL. IF YOU WANT, WE CAN HANG BACK AND--

NO. I MEAN, *THANKS,* BUT NO.

LOOK, I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT. I'VE DECIDED THIS IS THE BEST WAY.

YOU DECIDED?

WHO ELECTED YOU GRAND POOBAH, CAPTAIN KIRK, LORD COMMANDER OF THIS ENTERPRISE?

WHEN YOU LEFT TOWN, I HAD TO TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING *MYSELF.*

SOMEBODY HAD TO MIND THE STORE WHILE YOU WERE GETTING IT TOGETHER.

EXCUSE ME?

YOU KNOW WHAT? FORGET IT. EVERYONE TAKE FIVE OR... *WHATEVER.*

OH, DEAR. MAYBE I'D BETTER--

NO.

I GOT THIS.

I EXPECTED *PROGRESS* BY NOW, DRUSILLA.

MY PARDON, LORD ARCHAEUS. IT'S BUT A *MOMENTARY* SETBACK. I ASSURE YOU THAT--

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE CARE OF THIS WHILE *I* WAS IN SAN FRANCISCO. THESE CONTINUED DELAYS *DISPLEASE* ME.

YOU *DO* WISH TO REMAIN MY FAVORITE, DON'T YOU, DRUSILLA?

Y-YES...

I DON'T KNOW *WHY* I'M SO PERMISSIVE WITH YOU. IT MUST BE A FAMILIAL ATTACHMENT. I FEEL I CAN'T HELP BUT GIVE YOU ONE MORE CHANCE.

=GASP=

BUT TIME GROWS SHORT.

YOU WON'T FAIL ME AGAIN.

NO. *NEVER*, MY LORD.

I DO REGRET WHEN WE QUARREL, BUT YOU UNDERSTAND THAT A FATHER MUST DISCIPLINE HIS CHILDREN. THAT'S HOW I THINK OF MYSELF. AS A *FATHER.*

YES, OF COURSE.

IN ADDITION TO THE MATTER OF THE STATUE, THERE IS YOUR *BROTHER* WHO MUST STILL BE BROUGHT INTO THE FOLD.

ANGEL? YES, I'D LIKE THAT.

I WANT US TO BE ONE HAPPY FAMILY AGAIN, AND WHEN ANGEL IS WITH US, AND MAGIC TOWN UNDER OUR RULE, WE SHALL RETRIEVE OUR LONG-LOST *SPIKE.*

YES... SPIKE. ALL OF US *TOGETHER* AGAIN. OLD TIMES.

WHEN THE STATUE BUSINESS IS CONCLUDED, WE MUST LURE ANGEL TO US.

HE'LL COME FOR *HER.*

AND SUCH ATTACHMENTS WILL BE HIS UNDOING.

OKAY. OBVIOUSLY, I'M SORRY.

I THOUGHT WE WERE GOOD.

I THOUGHT SO, TOO. I MEAN, WE *ARE*.

ARE WE?

I SUPPOSE, *POSSIBLY*, I MIGHT HAVE RESENTED THAT YOU RAN OFF AND LEFT ME HERE TO DEAL WITH THINGS ON MY OWN.

DEEP DOWN.

I DIDN'T RUN OFF. YOU KNOW WHAT GILES WAS TO ME. HOW LOST I FELT.

I KNOW, I KNOW. IT'S STUPID.

IT'S JUST THAT I'VE SPENT MOST OF MY PROLONGED LIFE TAKING THINGS ALL ON MYSELF. AND THEN...

...I HAD A TEAMMATE. AND THEN YOU LEFT.

I UNDERSTOOD THE REASONS, AND EVERYTHING WAS FINE. EXCEPT I GUESS SOME PART OF ME *DIDN'T* THINK IT WAS FINE.

I WAS FLYING *SOLO* AGAIN. LIKE SO MANY TIMES BEFORE. BUT THIS TIME, IT WASN'T RIGHT. I PRETENDED IT WAS. I WAS *FOOLING* MYSELF.

I GUESS I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING OFF. IT WAS MY TIME TO BE SELFISH, AND I TOOK IT. I'M NOT SORRY. I *NEEDED* TO WORK SOME THINGS OUT.

BUT, WELL, I SUPPOSE I KEEP THINKING THAT *LEAVING* IS THE BEST WAY TO AVOID HURTING PEOPLE. IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME IT COULD BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

BUT WE'VE GOT TO THINK WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO *NOW.* FOR NADIRA. WE HAD A PLAN. BUT IF YOU DON'T FACE ARCHAEUS, THERE *IS* NO PLAN.

YOUR IDEA IS...RISKY. IF I GET NEAR ARCHAEUS AGAIN... IF I'M SUDDENLY ON *THEIR* TEAM, THEN YOU'LL *REALLY* HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL. AND I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF US ON OPPOSITE SIDES.

HE ALREADY TRIED TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOU AND IT *DIDN'T* WORK.

THAT'S BECAUSE *SPIKE* WAS THERE AND KNEW WHAT BUTTONS TO PUSH TO BRING ME OUT OF IT.

I DIDN'T LIKE BEING ANGELUS AGAIN. I DIDN'T LIKE LOSING CONTROL OF MYSELF THAT WAY. AND I DON'T WANT IT TO HAPPEN AGAIN.

YEAH, THERE'S A RISK. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO *TRUST* THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU, ANGEL.

ME ESPECIALLY. YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW I HAVE YOUR BACK.

ALL I'M SAYING IS WE BETTER NOT BE LEFT BEHIND TO GUARD THE CAR AGAIN. ARE WE PART OF THE TEAM OR NOT?

I QUITE AGREE, SISTER. WHAT AM I PRACTICING THREE TIMES A WEEK WITH THE CROSSBOW FOR? HONESTLY, I'M *JUST* AS HEROIC AS ANYONE ELSE.

I AM NOT IN CHARGE OF SUCH THINGS.

INSPECTOR BRANDT SAYS HE MIGHT HAVE A LEAD FOR US. I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH IT.

I'LL *TELL* YOU WHAT WE DO.

I'M GOING AFTER NADIRA. BUT I CAN'T DO IT ALONE. I *NEED* YOU.

BECAUSE WE'RE A TEAM.

AS NOTED BEFORE, THE STATUE IS HOLLOW. THIS IS PERHAPS MORE FUNCTIONAL THAN I THOUGHT UPON FIRST OBSERVATION.

INDEED, IT SEEMS MORE LIKE A *CONTAINER* THAN A STATUE.

THE LANGUAGE FOUND ON THE STATUE IS LIKE A MIX OF RUNES AND HIEROGLYPHICS--MAKING TRANSLATION PROBLEMATIC--BUT IT SEEMS LIKE SOME SORT OF WARD TO SEAL THINGS WITHIN.

I PLAN TO ASK THE MUSEUM TO PROVIDE AN EXPERT IN SUCH FOLKLORE FOR A MORE EXACT TRANSLATION.

ALL THE INFLUENCES POINT TO AN ARTIFACT OF ANCIENT ORIGIN, BUT THE WORKMANSHIP IS OF SUCH QUALITY THAT IT SEEMS A MORE MODERN--

BRRRRRING BRRRRRING BRRRRRING

AT THIS HOUR?

BRENDA? YES, I WAS JUST-- WHAT?

WELL, THAT'S MOST DISAPPOINTING. I'M SORRY TO HEAR IT. NATURALLY YOU MUST ACQUIESCE TO THE WISHES OF THE MUSEUM BOARD.

I'M SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, NILES, BUT I'VE BEEN TOLD IT'S A MATTER OF LIABILITY, YOU SEE.

LLOYD'S INSIST WE HOUSE IT HERE AT THE MUSEUM.

BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU ALL OF OUR *BEST* PEOPLE WILL BE ON THE JOB.

AND WE'LL KEEP YOU APPRISED OF ANY DEVELOPMENTS.

DON'T WORRY, THE STATUE WILL BE IN GOOD HANDS.

I'LL SEND A LORRY AROUND FOR IT IN THE MORNING.

"NORMALLY I WOULDN'T CALL SO LATE..."

...BUT I KNOW THE HOURS *YOU* KEEP, ANGEL.

I'VE GOT SOMETHING. IT'S THIN, BUT IT'S A PLACE TO START.

ANYTHING THAT POINTS US IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IS APPRECIATED.

WORK CREWS IN THE SEWERS JUST NORTH OF MAGIC TOWN REPORT STRANGE ACTIVITY. TUNNELS BEING SEALED AGAIN AFTER THE CREWS OPENED THEM UP, THAT SORT OF THING. THE PROXIMITY TO MAGIC TOWN AND THE WORD ***SEWER*** WERE RED FLAGS.

THANKS, BRANDT. HOLD ON A SECOND.

OKAY, PEOPLE. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE A GO.

FAITH, THIS IS YOUR PLAN. ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

WE KNOW ARCHAEUS WANTS TO GET HIS HOOKS INTO YOU.

BUT ***THIS*** TIME WE CAN MAKE IT WORK TO ***OUR*** ADVANTAGE.

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE READY HERE, BRANDT. LET US KNOW IF YOU HEAR ***ANYTHING*** ELSE. AND THANKS AGAIN.

OF COURSE. ALWAYS HAPPY TO HELP A FRIEND.

THE NORTHERN BORDER OF MAGIC TOWN.

KREEEEEEEEEEK

GET THE BASTARD!

PULL HIM DOWN!

KRAK

GAH

PAFT

PAFT

YOU AGAIN.

I REALLY DON'T LIKE YOU.

YOU MADE QUICK WORK OF THE UNDERCARD, BOYO.

BUT ARE YOU READY FOR THE MAIN EVENT?

SWIM BACK INTO THE DARKNESS, MY LITTLE ANGUS. RETURN LATER WITH A SMILE LIKE THE NIGHT.

RIGHT NOW ANGEL AND I MUST HAVE A BIT OF A CHIN WAG.

WE'LL HAVE OUR DANCE YET, BOYO.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU THINK WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT, DRU, BUT IF IT DOESN'T COVER THE TOPIC ***WHERE'S NADIRA,*** THEN IT'S GOING TO BE A REAL SHORT CONVERSATION.

IT IS ABOUT NADIRA. IT'S ABOUT ***ALL*** OF US.

WALK WITH ME, ANGEL.

I MISS US, ANGEL.

THERE'S NO ***US.***

BUT THERE IS. BECAUSE IT'S THE ***RIGHT*** THING.

ARCHAEUS IS PART OF US. AND WE'RE PART OF ***HIM.***

IT'S ABOUT BELONGING, ANGEL. AND WE ALL BELONG ***TOGETHER.***

I KNOW THE NEED TO BELONG CAN BE COMPELLING, DRU. BUT THIS THING WITH ARCHAEUS... IT ISN'T WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.

IT'S NOT ***BELONGING.*** IT'S A ***TRAP.***

I KNOW IT MUST ***SEEM*** LIKE THAT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED IN SAN FRANCISCO. BUT ARCHAEUS JUST WANTS ALL HIS CHILDREN UNDER ONE ROOF AGAIN. IF YOU COULD JUST ***TALK*** TO HIM...

TALK? I DON'T THINK SO.

THAT'S DISAPPOINTING.

CAN'T REASONABLE BEINGS TALK THROUGH THEIR DIFFERENCES?

YOU? REASONABLE?

I WOULD LOVE TO SEE SOME EVIDENCE OF THAT.

THE EVIDENCE IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU. I BROUGHT DRU BACK INTO THE FOLD WITHOUT CONFLICT.

I COULD HAVE ATTACKED YOU JUST NOW. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY. YOU'RE ALL *ALONE*. NO BUFFY AND HER FRIENDS TO DEFEND YOU.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO DEFEAT YOU. THAT WAS *NEVER* MY GOAL.

I WANT ONLY TO WELCOME YOU HOME.

HOME? IT TOOK ME A LIFETIME TO REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT WORD MEANS.

THE WAY *YOU* SAY IT IS OFFENSIVE.

I MIGHT BE ALONE, BUT I'LL *NEVER* JOIN YOU. IF YOU UNDERSTOOD ANYTHING ABOUT ME, YOU'D KNOW THAT ALREADY.

RIGHT NOW, WHILE YOU'RE MAKING YOUR SPEECH, MY FRIENDS ARE ARRANGING YOUR DEFEAT. I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO TO ME, BECAUSE I KNOW THE RIGHT THING IS GOING TO HAPPEN.

SO LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

IF I WANTED YOU DEAD, YOU'D BE DEAD.

IF YOU WON'T JOIN ME WILLINGLY...

...THEN I'LL SIMPLY IMPOSE MY WILL.

BUT I WILL *NOT* BE DENIED.

THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE. YOU'LL SEE. YOU'LL BE HOME WHERE YOU BELONG. YOU'LL BE WITH YOUR *FAMILY,* ANGEL.

DON'T... CALL ME... ANGEL.

I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT *ANGELUS* HAD A MUCH BETTER RING TO IT.

ANGEL *KNOWS* HE'S WALKING INTO A TRAP?

IT'S RISKY...

YEAH.

ANGEL RESISTED ARCHAEUS'S ATTEMPTS TO TAKE HIM OVER BEFORE, SO HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME THIS TIME.

I HOPE.

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A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

PART TWO

I THINK *SNEAKING* IS NO LONGER AN OPTION.

HELLO, LOVE. THEY CALL ME ANGUS.

I'M THE BOSS OF THIS LITTLE WELCOMING COMMITTEE.

I GUESS WE KNEW IT WAS GOING TO GET NOISY SOONER OR LATER.

FAITH HAS ARRIVED. WITH ALL HER FUZZY LITTLE DUCKLINGS IN A LINE.

I TOLD YOU.

I WAS SUPPOSED TO COME IN AND DISTRACT YOU WHILE FAITH BROUGHT IN HER TEAM TO GET NADIRA. STRIKE NOW AND STRIKE FAST. AND YOU CAN *FINISH* HER.

YOU CAN FINISH *ALL* OF THEM.

YOU ***SEE***, LORD ARCHAEUS? ANGELUS IS ONE OF ***US***.

AND WE'RE THE ***STRONGER*** FOR IT.

YOU HAVE SENT TROOPS TO MEET FAITH?

JUST AS YOU COMMANDED. MY NEW FAVORITE, ANGUS, IS LEADING THEM. HE HAS A SPECIAL TALENT FOR VIOLENCE.

I WOULDN'T GO HALF MEASURES ON THIS, ARCHAEUS. THERE'S A NITOBE DEMON WITH HER NAMED KOH. A TRAINED, ELITE-CLASS WARRIOR.

AND ONE OF THE WOMEN HAS AN *OLD ONE* KNOCKING AROUND INSIDE HER HEAD. IF SHE GETS OUT, IT'S A GAME CHANGER.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SPRING A TRAP, THEN MAKE IT COUNT.

GO AND TAKE CHARGE OF THIS SITUATION PERSONALLY, MY DAUGHTER. I WANT NO MISTAKES.

TAKE *EVERYONE.* OVERWHELM THEM.

AS YOU COMMAND, LORD ARCHAEUS.

ALREADY YOU'RE PROVING *USEFUL*, ANGELUS. IT PLEASES ME THAT I WASN'T FORCED TO *DESTROY* YOU.

I'M GLAD YOU BROUGHT ME TO THE SURFACE AGAIN. I HAVE A SECOND CHANCE TO BE ON THE WINNING TEAM.

NOT TEAM. *FAMILY.*

FAMILY?

A HARD LESSON I LEARNED FROM *THE SLAYER* IN SAN FRANCISCO. SHE AND HER FRIENDS WERE *BOUND* TOGETHER. NOT LIKE AN ARMY OR A *TEAM*--- SOMETHING MORE. A *FAMILY.*

AND THERE IS *POWER* IN THAT.

THE MORE WHO ARE *BOUND* TO ME BY FAMILY TIES, THE STRONGER I GET. THE STRONGER WE ARE TOGETHER.

NOW *YOU* WILL HELP ME CONVINCE NADIRA TO CALL FORTH THE MAGIC. WITH THE MAGIC AS PART OF OUR FAMILY, WE SHALL BE UNSTOPPABLE.

I'LL TRY, BUT... WELL... IT MIGHT BE *TRICKY.*

PAFT

PAFT

BAP

YOU'VE GOT SOME GOOD MOVES, LASS, BUT CAN YOU *TAKE* A PUNCH?

YEAH, I CAN TAKE IT. BUT HAVING BEEN ON *BOTH* SIDES OF THE EQUATION...

...I'D MUCH *PREFER*...

WHAP

...TO DISH IT OUT!

FWAM

TWANG

PAFT

PAFT

SOPHIE, DARLING, WE *DISCUSSED* THIS. ONE OF US HAS TO COVER WHILE THE OTHER RELOADS.

YOU *KNOW* HOW TRIGGER HAPPY I GET.

FRED! YOUR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE.

GOT YOUR BACK, KOH!

PAFT

I DON'T KNOW THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS GESTURE.

IT MEANS WE KICK ASS, PARTNER.

THEN I APPROVE.

PAFT

I'VE LEARNED SOMETHING WATCHING YOUR HOOLIGAN TEAMS PLAY ON TELEVISION.

AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE, SLAYER?

KRAK

HEADERS!

SWAP

PAFT

I'D RATHER YOU HADN'T DONE THAT.

ANGUS WAS *MINE.* THE LITTLE BROTHER I NEVER HAD. I WAS STILL *TEACHING* HIM THINGS...

TEACHING HIM WHAT? TO BELIEVE ANY PROMISE HE HEARS?

LOOK, DRU, WE DON'T HAVE TO DO IT THIS WAY. WHATEVER IT IS YOU THINK YOU'RE GETTING FROM ARCHAEUS, IT'S NOT WORTH IT. YOU CAN *RESIST* HIM LIKE ANGEL DID.

BUT MY DEAR LITTLE SLAYER, HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THE GLAD TIDINGS? ANGEL IS BACK WITH ARCHAEUS. BACK WITH *ME.*

WHERE HE BELONGS.

AND HE COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.

GASP

YOU'RE LYING.

IT'S TRUE. AND SINCE THIS IS BECOMING TIRESOME, HERE'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT'S TRUE.

I'M AFRAID WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL YOU NOW.

YEAH. RIGHT.

YOU AND WHAT ARM--

OKAY, SO I GUESS I WALKED INTO THAT ONE.

HOW DO YOU MEAN... TRICKY?

I SIMPLY MEAN, NADIRA DOESN'T REALLY *CONTROL* THE MAGIC. IT'S MORE LIKE SHE ASKS IT FOR *FAVORS.*

SHE'S PRETTY *VAGUE* ABOUT IT MOST OF THE TIME, ACTUALLY. IRRITATING GIRL. REST ASSURED, WE'LL GET WHAT WE NEED FROM HER.

IT SOUNDS LIKE THE MAGIC *TRUSTS* HER.

I THINK SO.

AND NADIRA TRUSTS *YOU.*

I SUPPOSE.

YOU NEED TO GET HER TO CALL THE MAGIC, LURE IT OUT OF HIDING. FROM THERE, I CAN MAKE THE MAGIC...AN OFFER.

YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING IT WANTS?

MY BOY, HOW CAN YOU DOUBT ME?

I NOTICE YOU'RE RELYING HEAVILY ON THE MINIONS THESE DAYS.

DON'T YOU GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY ANYMORE?

POOR DRUSILLA. THE WALLFLOWER WITH A SWORD.

SO LONG SINCE ANYONE HAS ASKED HER TO DANCE.

UH, SHOULD WE--

TRUST HER.

COME. EMBRACE DEATH.

GET BENT.

SKLING

ARE WE A LITTLE SLOW? IT'S FROM FIGHTING SO MANY *MINIONS,* I BET.

DULLS THE REFLEXES. PUTS SLEEPY THOUGHTS IN YOUR BRAIN.

BUT YOU *ARE* ENTHUSIASTIC.

SWIK

OOPS.

NNGNE

SKLANG

WHAP

A DISCARDED PAGE FROM AN OLD DIARY, STICKING TO A WET, GRAY ROCK.

WHO *DISCARDED* YOU, LITTLE FLUTTER? IS THERE NO GUARDIAN *ANGEL* COME TO SAVE YOU?

KLINK

NADIRA?

IT'S ME. ANGEL.

ANGEL?!

YOU KNOW, THIS MIGHT BE THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE ACTUALLY BEEN SURPRISED TO SEE ME. DIDN'T THE *MAGIC* TELL YOU I WAS COMING?

NO. THE MAGIC'S BEEN SEARCHING FOR ME, BUT I'VE BEEN BLOCKING IT OUT.

WHY? IF YOU SUMMON THE MAGIC HERE, IT CAN PROBABLY *HELP* US.

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT ARCHAEUS *WANTS*. WHO KNOWS WHAT ARCHAEUS COULD DO IF HE GOT CONTROL OF THE MAGIC?

I'D LIKE TO THINK THE MAGIC WOULD CHOOSE *ME* OVER ARCHAEUS, BUT IT'S JUST TOO UNPREDICTABLE. NO. I WON'T CALL IT.

THAT'S A SHAME. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY CONVENIENT.

STILL, IT WAS A GOOD IDEA, ANGELUS. WORTH A TRY.

ARCHAEUS!

EASY, NADIRA. LET'S NOT STRUGGLE, OKAY?

NO!

LET ME HAVE ANOTHER CRACK AT HER, ARCHAEUS. SHE'LL BEG TO DO WHAT WE TELL HER.

ARE YOU *CERTAIN* ALL THE VAMPS ARE ON THE JOB WITH FAITH?

POSITIVE.

WHAM

COME ON!

WHAT?!

ANGEL!

IS THIS REALLY THE TIME FOR A PHONE CALL?

JUST NEED TO HIT *SEND* ON THIS TEXT.

LEFT! HURRY!

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING?

LET'S JUST SAY THAT SOMEBODY WITH MY AVERSION TO SUNLIGHT KNOWS WHERE TO FIND THE UNDERGROUND TUNNEL MAPS FOR THIS AREA OF TOWN.

YOU *BETRAYED* ME, ANGEL!

WE TRICKED ARCHAEUS INTO TAKING ME TO YOU, MAKING SURE NONE OF HIS UNDERLINGS WERE AROUND TO CHASE US.

THAT'S ALL THERE WAS TO IT?

NO. BUT THAT'S FAITH'S PROBLEM.

ANGEL, THIS ISN'T OVER.

THIS IS HOW IT ENDS FOR THE MIGHTY FAITH. LEGENDS WILL TELL THE TALE OF DRUSILLA, THE SLAYER OF SLAYERS, THE LOVELIEST OF THE--

TWEEP

TWEEP

FINALLY! HOLD THAT THOUGHT, DRU.

I GOT HER

GO QUIETLY. TAKE THE SISTERS AND START THE AUTOMOBILE.

WAY AHEAD OF YOU.

SKLANG

SMAK

FWAM

KILL HER!

TIME TO RUN, KOH!

IT SEEMS SO.

GO GO GO!

THAT WAS CLOSE.

WHAT? YOU NEVER PLAYED RING AND RUN WITH VAMPIRES BEFORE?

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT REFERENCE.

GILES'S HOUSE.

THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME HERE INSTEAD OF MY PLACE IN MAGIC TOWN.

I SUPPOSE IF THEY GRABBED YOU THERE BEFORE, THEY COULD TRY IT AGAIN.

YES, BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT.

SO CLOSE TO THE CENTER OF MAGIC TOWN, MY BOND WITH THE MAGIC WOULD BE NEARLY AUTOMATIC. HERE, I CAN BLOCK IT OUT.

I HATE TO SAY THIS, BUT...I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I CAN *TRUST* THE MAGIC RIGHT NOW.

NADIRA. SHE'S OKAY, RIGHT?

YEAH. SHE'S JUST WORRIED. WE ALL ARE. I'M JUST GLAD THE PLAN ACTUALLY WORKED.

JUST REMEMBER I LET DRU WHALE ON ME TO BUY YOU SOME TIME.

WE GOT LUCKY.

I PREFER TO THINK IT WAS THE DEFT EXECUTION OF AN EXCELLENT PLAN. BUT I NEVER TURN DOWN A LITTLE LUCK WHEN IT COMES ALONG.

SURE. BUT PUTTING ONE OVER ON ARCHAEUS ISN'T THE SAME AS *DEFEATING* HIM.

RIGHT NOW I'M SURE HE'S ROLLING OUT PLAN B...

MAGIC TOWN

AGE CLOTHING STORE

MUSEUM

WELL...

Orient Knobbs BEVERAGES

LITHIATED LEMON

PALE DRY

MUSEUM

...WHAT THE BLOODY HELL YOU S'POSE THAT'S ALL ABOUT?

MUSEUM

A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

PART THREE

"NADIRA, ARE YOU OKAY?"

GILES'S HOUSE.

NADIRA?

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED.

I TAKE IT YOU MEAN SOMETHING *NEW* HAS HAPPENED.

SINCE... YOU KNOW... SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED.

YES. SOMETHING NEW WITH THE *MAGIC*.

WHAT IS IT?

I... I'M NOT SURE.

WHEN I'M OUT OF MAGIC TOWN IT'S SORT OF LIKE BEING OFF THE GRID. I ONLY GET A FAINT SENSE OF THE MAGIC. OFTEN, I DON'T FEEL THE BOND AT ALL...

BUT WHAT I JUST FELT WAS... SIGNIFICANT.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT. I DON'T EVEN GET A FAINT SENSE ANYMORE. IT'S LIKE I'VE BEEN CUT OFF.

THEN LET'S GO BACK TO MAGIC TOWN.

MAYBE... I'M NOT SURE...

I'M SURE YOUR PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOU, PARKER AND TRICIA, AND THE OTHERS.

NO. I'M...

I'M AFRAID.

I USED TO BE ABLE TO GUIDE THE MAGIC, BUT IT'S GETTING HARDER.

IT'S LIKE AN ADOLESCENT, ACTING OUT, ANGRY AT THE WORLD AND NOT EVEN SURE WHY.

YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT?

I NEVER CONTROLLED IT. BUT IT WOULD LISTEN TO ME. I THOUGHT WE WERE LIKE SOME ODD PAIR OF SIBLINGS.

I WAS WRONG. WE'RE NOT SIBLINGS. THE MAGIC IS MORE LIKE A TIGER CUB I FOUND AND RAISED.

AND IT'S STILL A WILD THING.

IF YOU ARE AFRAID...

THEN I WILL GO WITH YOU.

LET US FACE THE TIGER TOGETHER.

"GRAB A PINT WITH US, INSPECTOR BRANDT?"

GOT TO FILE MY PAPERWORK, DON'T I?

SUIT YOURSELF.

E STATION

BRANDT.

KLIK

ANGEL.

GRRRRRR

=NNGH=

WHAM

BAP

GAH

INSPECTOR BRANDT. SO HELPFUL. CARES SO MUCH ABOUT ALL THE TROUBLES WE'RE HAVING IN MAGIC TOWN.

EVEN HELPS US TRACK DOWN ARCHAEUS.

ACK

TOLD US RIGHT WHERE TO LOOK. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT'S FUNNY?

WHAT'S FUNNY IS HOW TELLING ME WHERE TO FIND ARCHAEUS IS SO SIMILAR TO SENDING US INTO A *TRAP.* ODD HOW HE SEEMED READY FOR US.

CAN'T... STAND UP AGAINST... ARCHAEUS.

TOO... POWERFUL.

THERE'S *ALWAYS* A REASON TO GIVE UP. YOU'LL EXCUSE ME IF I TRY ANYWAY.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. ARCHAEUS ISN'T JUST POWERFUL. HE'S *SMART.*

HE LEARNED FROM THE SETBACK YOU AND BUFFY GAVE HIM IN CALIFORNIA. AND HIS REACH IS FAR.

YOU THINK HIS REACH GOES FAR JUST BECAUSE HE MANAGED TO CORRUPT ONE COP?

NOT JUST *ONE,* MATE.

BUT THERE IS JUST ONE OF *YOU.*

GRRRR

GRR

COME NOW, DIMPLES. LET'S DO OUR BUSINESS. *GOOD* DOG.

CRIK

GOOD DIMPLES. WHAT A PERFECT LITTLE DOG YOU ARE.

=GASP=

ARF ARF

PANT PANT PANT

UNHAND MY DIMPLES, YOU MONSTER!

OH!

THMP

BAP

GRRRRRR

YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE, ANGEL. ARCHAEUS *WANTED* TO BRING YOU INTO THE FOLD.

BUT YOU ALWAYS KNOW *BEST*, DON'T YOU? SO STUBBORN. WELL, LET ME TELL YOU--

HOW ABOUT YOU *DON'T* TELL US, BRANDT.

FRANKLY, I'VE HAD A LOT MORE EXPERIENCE WITH ANGEL'S STUBBORNESS THAN *YOU* HAVE.

PAFT

WHY DO PEOPLE KEEP SAYING THAT?

I THINK I'VE COME A LONG WAY AS A TEAM PLAYER.

KRAK

PAFT

PAFT

I KNOW YOU WANTED TO SEE BRANDT ALONE FOR SOME KIND OF VAMPO-A-VAMPO SHOWDOWN, BUT I THOUGHT I'D CHECK ON YOU.

SEE, *THAT'S* WHY WE'RE A GOOD TEAM. YOU KNOW WHEN *NOT* TO LISTEN TO ME. COME ON. LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

UH, SO I'M SUPPOSED TO *GUESS* WHEN TO LISTEN TO YOU AND WHEN NOT TO?

THE POINT IS THAT WE TRUST EACH OTHER BECAUSE WE ALSO *KNOW* EACH OTHER.

AND WHEN I SLIP UP, *YOU'RE* THE ONE I TRUST TO BE THERE, TO LISTEN TO ME OR NOT, DEPENDING ON WHAT YOUR INSTINCT TELLS YOU.

ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT ANGEL-- *THE* ANGEL-- ADMITS HE SLIPS UP NOW AND THEN?

WELL... I'M HUNDREDS OF YEARS OLD.

IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER.

YOU WERE CERTAINLY RIGHT ABOUT BRANDT.

I WISH I HADN'T BEEN. WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF ALLIES OUTSIDE MAGIC TOWN.

I EXPECTED ARCHAEUS'S LAIR TO BE PACKED WITH VAMPS, BUT SINCE THEY WERE CLEARLY READY FOR US, BRANDT WAS THE BEST GUESS.

IF ARCHAEUS HAD BRANDT, WHO ELSE DOES HE HAVE? GOVERNMENT MINISTERS? ARMY GENERALS?

THAT MIGHT BE A *LONG-TERM* CONCERN, BUT I DON'T THINK ARCHAEUS HAS HAD TIME FOR THAT. BRANDT WAS CONNECTED TO ME.

THIS IS ABOUT TAKING OVER MAGIC TOWN. ARCHAEUS THINKS IT WILL ADD TO HIS POWER.

AND HE'S PROBABLY RIGHT.

STILL, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE TO HAVE A LITTLE POLICE BACKUP.

MAGIC TOWN IS *OUR* PROBLEM. WE'RE ON OUR OWN.

SO BUSINESS AS USUAL IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

YEAH. PRETTY MUCH.

I AM PLEASED TO BRING YOU GOOD NEWS, LORD ARCHAEUS. OUR GIFT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED.

EXCELLENT. THIS ALMOST MAKES UP FOR YOUR PREVIOUS *FAILURE.*

FAILURE?

YOU LET FAITH AND THOSE OTHER FOOLS ESCAPE. YOU BROUGHT ANGEL TO ME AND FAILED TO DETECT HIS RUSE. I *RELY* ON YOU, DRUSILLA. I WAS... DISAPPOINTED.

I...I...

NEVER MIND.

YOU'RE FORTUNATE THAT I HAVE SUCH AFFECTION AND *TOLERANCE* FOR YOU.

YES. SO... FORTUNATE.

LET'S GO CLAIM CREDIT FOR OUR GIFT, SHALL WE?

GATHER EVERYONE. IT'S TIME.

AS YOU COMMAND, LORD ARCHAEUS.

AND THUS DOES THE FINALE COMMENCE.

HELP! HELP!

HE'S GOT MY DIMPLES!

OI! WHAT'S THAT METAL BASTARD DOING TO THE OLD LADY?

COME ON!

LOOK, YOU, PUT THAT POOCH DOWN AND PEE OFF. DON'T MAKE US STOVE YOUR HEAD IN-- BECAUSE WE'LL DO IT.

BLOODY HELL.

HAVE AT THE BUGGER!

TEACH YOU TO HARASS OLD LADIES!

WHAP

BAP

BEST PIZZA

BEVERAGES

WAIT! PLEASE!

NO!

DON'T HURT HIM!

YOU'VE GOT TO *STOP.* THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND. THEY'RE AFRAID.

JUST LIKE YOU'RE AFRAID.

GOD BLESS YA, MISS.

WE'LL FIGURE THIS OUT. JUST LIKE WE ALWAYS HAVE.

BUT FIRST, WE CAN'T HURT ANYONE ELSE. YOU UNDERSTAND?

MY PRECIOUS DIMPLES!

I KNOW HOW IT'S BEEN FOR YOU, HOW *ALONE* YOU FEEL.

THERE'S NO OTHER BEING LIKE YOU.

AND SO YOU WANT TO BE LIKE US.

TO TALK AND TOUCH AND BREATHE. I'VE *SENSED* IT IN YOU, HOW OUT OF PLACE YOU FEEL.

BUT THIS METAL BODY... IT'S A MOCKERY OF WHAT YOU WANT.

IT'S *FAKE.*

OKAY?

GASP

NADIRA!

FRED, DON'T!

WAIT! YOU'LL SCARE HIM.

SCARE HIM?

SUCK

PATHETIC CREATURE.

YOU *DARE* LAY HANDS ON AN OLD ONE?

OH DEAR. IS THIS BETTER OR WORSE?

MUCH WORSE.

S. Fischetti

SORRY, ANGEL. NADIRA'S NOT HERE. WE THOUGHT SHE WAS WITH YOU.

NOBODY WAS AT GILES'S HOUSE.

AND THEY AREN'T ANSWERING THEIR PHONES. WE THOUGHT MAYBE--

FWASH

WHAT THE--?!

A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

PART FOUR

YOU BELIEVE YOURSELF *POWERFUL* BECAUSE YOU'RE A CREATURE OF MAGIC?

I WILL *SHOW* YOU POWER!

SHZZAP

STOP! HE'S *FRIGHTENED.*

DON'T PROVOKE HIM!

PROVOKE *HIM?*

ALWAYS AM *I* ATTACKED AND HARASSED BY--

WHAMM

KRASH

INSOLENT WIND-UP TOY!

YOU'LL FIND HAVING A BODY ALSO MAKES YOU AN EASIER *TARGET.*

VWISSH

PARLOR TRICKS!

DO YOU REALLY THINK SUCH THINGS CAN DEFEND YOU AGAINST THE MIGHT OF--

ILLYRIA, NO!

WHAT--?!

WAIT! YOU'VE GOT TO *STOP* THIS!

I KNOW YOU'RE JUST PROTECTING YOURSELF, BUT YOU'RE GROWING, *MATURING.* AND THAT MEANS LEARNING *RESTRAINT.* THERE ARE FRIENDS YOU HAVEN'T MET YET, ALL WAITING TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE IF YOU GIVE *THEM* A CHANCE.

BUT IT STARTS WITH *YOU.* THE FIRST LEAP OF FAITH IS YOURS TO MAKE. THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE *NOW* WILL BE PART OF WHO YOU BECOME FOREVER.

DON'T YOU TRUST ME ANYMORE?

TRUST? I'D RECONSIDER HER ADVICE IF I WERE YOU, TIN MAN.

THE ONLY ONE YOU CAN COUNT ON IS *YOURSELF.*

NOT TRUE, ILLYRIA. YOU *CAN* TRUST US. NOBODY WANTS TO HURT YOU.

YOU *ATTACKED* ME.

I ONLY WISHED TO *STOP* YOU FROM FIGHTING THE MAGIC.

THAT *STATUE* ATTACKED ME.

THE STATUE ATTACKED *FRED.* AND FRED ATTACKED THE STATUE BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT IT WAS HURTING NADIRA.

WE ARE *ALL* AFRAID--SOME OF US AT TIMES OF DIRE PERIL, AND SOME OF US ALL THE TIME-- BUT NONE OF US ARE IMMUNE. AND WHEN WE FEAR, WE SEE ONLY ENEMIES.

BUT THAT IS THE *TRAP.* BECAUSE WE ALREADY HAVE TOO MANY *REAL* ENEMIES. WE DO NOT NEED TO SEE THEM AMONGST OURSELVES.

TALK! YOU WOULD KILL ME IF YOU COULD, ELDRE KOH. FOR YOUR *REVENGE.*

NO.

ONCE I DID THIRST FOR VENGEANCE. IT IS TRUE.

BUT WE ARE NOT THE SAME PEOPLE, EITHER OF US. FRED IS PART OF YOU. YOU ARE AN OLD ONE LIVING IN *COEXISTENCE.* SOMETHING WHICH HAS PERHAPS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO BE THE *FIRST* TO TRUST, TO BREAK THE CYCLE.

I WILL NOT FIGHT YOU, ILLYRIA. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME. THE PERSON ON WHOM I WANTED TO EXACT MY REVENGE NO LONGER EXISTS.

THE PERSON WHO THOUGHT HE *NEEDED* THAT REVENGE IS GONE ALSO.

YOU HAVE NO ENEMIES HERE.

GASP

FRED!

ARE YOU OKAY, MY DEAR?

YEAH. JUST A LITTLE...DIZZY. IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THAT COMING AND GOING.

WILL SHE RETURN?

I DON'T KNOW. WHEN SHE GOES, SHE USUALLY STAYS GONE A WHILE. IT'S NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE.

BUT I THINK WHAT YOU SAID MADE A *DIFFERENCE*, KOH. MAYBE YOU'VE GIVEN HER SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

IF MY WORDS WERE ENOUGH TO BRING YOU BACK SAFELY, THEN THAT IS ALL THAT MATTERS FOR NOW.

NADIRA! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WE'RE GOOD, ANGEL. IT'S UNDER CONTROL.

WE HAD A VISIT FROM ILLYRIA.

ILLYRIA? WHAT TRIGGERED THAT?

UH... MAYBE *THAT.*

IT'S OKAY. WE'RE FIGURING IT OUT.

IT'S THE *MAGIC*, ANGEL. IT'S INHABITED THIS BRONZE STATUE.

OH. WELL, THAT'S... GOOD. IS THAT GOOD?

WHERE DID HE GET A NIFTY NEW METAL BODY IS MY QUESTION.

ALLOW ME TO SHED LIGHT ON THAT QUESTION, SLAYER.

THE STATUE IS AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT, ITS ORIGINS NEARLY LOST TO HISTORY AND LEGEND. IT WAS BUILT TO BE A CONTAINER OF MAGIC.

OR IN THIS CASE, A *FOCUS* FOR IT.

FOOM

WE KNOW YOU WANT MAGIC TOWN. WE KNOW YOU THINK RECRUITING THE MAGIC WILL ADD TO YOUR POWER.

WE'RE NOT LETTING THAT HAPPEN.

OH? ARE YOU ALL REALLY SUCH... HYPOCRITES?

AH, BUT THAT'S RIGHT. YOU WEREN'T HERE FOR THE NITOBE'S ELOQUENT SPEECH. BUT I ENJOYED IT IMMENSELY. SUCH *NOBLE* WORDS.

HE SPOKE OF *TRUST.* AND HERE I AM TO *OFFER* TRUST IN THE FORM OF A GIFT.

THE MAGIC WAS ONCE SCATTERED, A VAGUE CONSCIOUSNESS PULSING WITH ANXIETY, PLAGUED BY QUESTIONS--WHO AM I? *WHAT* AM I? HOW DO I FIT?

I HAVE GIVEN HIM THE GIFT OF AGENCY, THE GIFT OF *FORM.*

LIAR! WHAT YOU OFFER IS *FAKE.*

IS IT? HE CAN MOVE AND FEEL. HE TOUCHES THE WORLD.

KNOW THIS. I ASK *NOTHING* IN RETURN FOR THIS GIFT, BUT I DO MAKE A *REQUEST.*

I ASK THE MAGIC TO *JOIN* ME OF ITS OWN FREE WILL. IF YES, I WILL REJOICE. IF NO, THEN I MUST RESPECT THAT.

WHO ARE ANY OF *YOU* TO DENY THIS CHOICE?

I'M THE MAGIC'S *FRIEND.* THAT'S WHO.

AND SOMETIMES YOU *HAVE* TO STEP IN AND MAKE A TOUGH CHOICE FOR SOMEONE ELSE-- WHEN IT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO HELP.

SO SAYS EVERY *TYRANT* IN HISTORY. DO WHAT I SAY FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.

IS THIS HOW THE *GOOD* PEOPLE CONDUCT THEMSELVES? IS THIS HOW YOU *HELP?* A PITY.

I ASK YOU TO JOIN ME. NOT TO KEEP AS A *PET* AS OTHERS WOULD.

I ASK OUT OF RESPECT FOR WHAT YOU ARE. I ASK YOU TO JOIN ME AS AN *EQUAL.*

NO!

GET AWAY FROM HIM, YOU MONSTER!

LITTLE FOOL!

SWAP

DID YOU NOT LEARN YOUR LESSON LAST TIME?

ARCHAEUS!

WE END THIS NOW!

FWAM

SMAK

ARRGH

I'VE TOYED WITH YOU *ENOUGH*, ANGEL.

YOU ASKED TO *END* THIS, AND I QUITE AGREE.

KRASH

YOU WANT TO RUN IN YELLING AGAIN, OR DO WE STRATEGIZE?

TALK FAST!

KOH. BACK ARMS.

I THINK I SEE YOUR STRATAGEM.

YOU SEE, MY FRIEND? IT IS *THEY* WHO ARE THE AGGRESSORS. THEY WHO *ATTACK.*

I COME IN PEACE, BEARING A GIFT. A GIFT THEY DON'T WANT *YOU* TO HAVE.

COULD YOUR CHOICE BE ANY MORE OBVIOUS?

D-DON'T LISTEN TO HIM.

THERE ARE P-PEOPLE WHO ***CARE***...CARE ABOUT ALL OF MAGIC TOWN. ARCHAEUS JUST WANTS TO ***USE*** YOU.

WASH&WAX

YOU'D SAY THAT, OF COURSE, WOULDN'T YOU? MAYBE IT'S BEST YOU DON'T TALK.

EVER AGAIN.

KLAK

WHAT?!

LET'S FETCH THE CROSSBOWS FROM THE CAR, YOU SAID. I *KNEW* I SHOULDN'T HAVE LISTENED TO YOU.

SHUT UP AND GIVE ME ANOTHER ONE!

GRRAAAWR

UH, LADIES? DECISION TIME!

:GAH:

WHAT ARE YOU--?

NOW, ANGEL!

HAVE YOU NO BRAINS AT ALL?

I STOPPED YOU BEFORE. STOPPING YOU *AGAIN* IS CHILD'S PLAY.

MAYBE. BUT YOU'RE ALL OUT OF ARMS.

SWAK

ARRGH

SHRIK

NNGN

ENOUGH!

GET OFF OF ME, YOU INSOLENT INSECTS!

YOU'RE A DEMON LORD, ARCHAEUS, SO I *KNOW* THERE'S PLENTY OF FIGHT IN YOU.

BUT WE'RE SMART AND *TOGETHER.* AND WE'LL BEAT YOU. WE'LL BEAT YOU IF IT TAKES FOREVER.

YOU FORGOT A LESSON I THOUGHT YOU'D LEARNED WHEN YOU FLED SAN FRANCISCO.

YOU'RE *ALONE.* EVEN WHEN YOU WERE SURROUNDED BY MINIONS YOU WERE *STILL* ALONE.

BECAUSE MINIONS AREN'T *FAMILY.*

:HEH:

:HEH HEH:

HAHA HAHAHA HA

I ASSURE YOU, ANGEL, THAT IS A LESSON I LEARNED *VERY* WELL.

DRUSILLA!

GRRR

AT YOUR SERVICE, LORD ARCHAEUS.

GRRR

GRRR

YOU COULD HAVE BEEN *WITH* US, ANGEL. YOU COULD HAVE BEEN A PART OF IT--AN *IMPORTANT* PART. YOU CHOSE FOOLISHLY.

MAGIC TOWN *WILL* BE MINE. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

WITHOUT MEANING TO, YOU'VE ACTUALLY *HELPED* ME, ANGEL.

I DO SO LOVE IT WHEN HE HELPS ACCIDENTALLY. IT MAKES HIS FACE GO ALL SCRUNCHY WITH CONFUSION.

YOU'VE ALLOWED ME TO SHOW THE MAGIC MY SINCERITY, WILLING TO ACHIEVE MY GOALS WITHOUT CONFLICT. BUT I'M ALSO A DEMON LORD. AND THAT MEANS POWER. THAT WILL BE THE *NEXT* DEMONSTRATION.

AND AS YOU CAN SEE, MY FAMILY IS BIGGER THAN YOURS.

Clothing WAREHOUSE

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK? I TAKE THE FIVE HUNDRED ON THE LEFT, AND YOU TAKE THE FIVE HUNDRED ON THE RIGHT?

EVEN WITH YOUR CONSIDERABLE SKILLS, I THINK THERE ARE TOO MANY FOR...

AH. GALLOWS HUMOR.

SEE? I TOLD YOU HE'D FIT IN.

YOU COULD HAVE JOINED ME, ANGEL, BUT YOU REFUSED!

I WILL DELIGHT IN WATCHING AS MY CLAN RIPS YOU INTO PIECES, AND THEN *SCATTERS* THOSE PIECES TO THE FOUR CORNERS--

NO, LORD ARCHAEUS. MAKE HIM WATCH AS YOU KILL FAITH FIRST, AND THEN--

QUIET!

SMAK

=NNGN=

A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

PART FIVE

ALL I REQUIRE FROM YOU, DAUGHTER, IS *OBEDIENCE.*

JUST MAKE SURE YOUR *CHILDREN* ATTACK WHEN I GIVE THE ORDER.

DRU, LISTEN TO ARCHAEUS. IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT? IS *THIS* HOW YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE WITH HIM?

JUST GO. BE ***FREE*** OF HIM.

RIGHT ON CUE: ANGEL, THE *GOOD* VAMPIRE WITH A SOUL, WANTS TO HELP EVEN HIS ENEMIES.

LET US FINALLY PUT AN *END* TO YOUR TEDIOUS PREDICTABILITY.

O!! HANG ON A MINUTE, YA UGLY BUGGER.

YOU MESS WITH ANGEL AND FAITH--THEN YOU MESS WITH *US* TOO.

THEY HAD OUR BACKS WHEN THE REST OF LONDON WANTED TO PRETEND WE DIDN'T EXIST.

AND NADIRA HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE TO HELP, NEVER JUDGING WHAT WE'D TURNED INTO.

AND FRED AND KOH, PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT US, *FIGHT* FOR US.

KILL THEM ALL!

the Clothing WAREHOUSE

PAFT

FIGHT! FIGHT FOR MAGIC TOWN!

KRAK

IF WE DON'T MAKE IT THROUGH THIS, I LOVE YOU, TRICIA.

PAFT

I SURVIVED MEETING YOUR *MOTHER*, PARKER. YOU BET I'LL SURVIVE *THIS*.

BACK FOR ROUND TWO, EH?

POOR *MORTAL* CHILD. DON'T YOU KNOW MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE IS AN ETERNAL SECOND CHANCE? WHEREAS YOUR LIFE IS AN EYE-BLINK, A SNOWFLAKE ON THE WIND, DRIFTING TOWARD A FIRE--

WHAP

TIME TO PUT A CORK IN THE *CRAZY TALK*.

IT WILL BE THE GREATEST PLEASURE OF MY EXISTENCE TO *END* YOU, ANGEL.

YOU KEEP *SAYING* THAT, BUT I'M STILL HERE.

I'LL *ALWAYS* BE HERE. YOU KILL ME, SOMEONE WILL STEP UP AND TAKE MY PLACE.

BECAUSE I DIDN'T *ASK* THESE PEOPLE TO FIGHT FOR ME. I DIDN'T HAVE TO *COERCE* THEM LIKE YOU DO WITH YOUR MINIONS.

THAT'S WHY YOUR *FAMILY* IS A JOKE.

THAT'S WHY YOU'LL *NEVER* BE AS STRONG AS YOU THINK.

NO!

ANGEL'S IN TROUBLE!

LIKE WE PLANNED, PEOPLE! HIT HIM WITH THE HOLY WATER!

SSSSSSS

ARRRGH

SSSSSSS

DOG-PILE THE BASTARD!

YOU INSOLENT--

COME ON! GET HIM!

LET'S GO!

GRRRRR

PAFT

PAFT

HOW CAN I *STAKE* HIM IF HE'S *MIST*?

PAFT

POOF

POOF

THERE'S TOO MANY!

WE WERE TOLD THIS WOULD BE EASY PICKINGS. ARCHAEUS IS DOWN AND THE WHOLE *TOWN* IS AGAINST US!

BUGGER THIS!

DRUSILLA! GET THOSE COWARDS *BACK* HERE!

PAFT

DRUSILLA!

I WILL NOT BE DEFEATED!

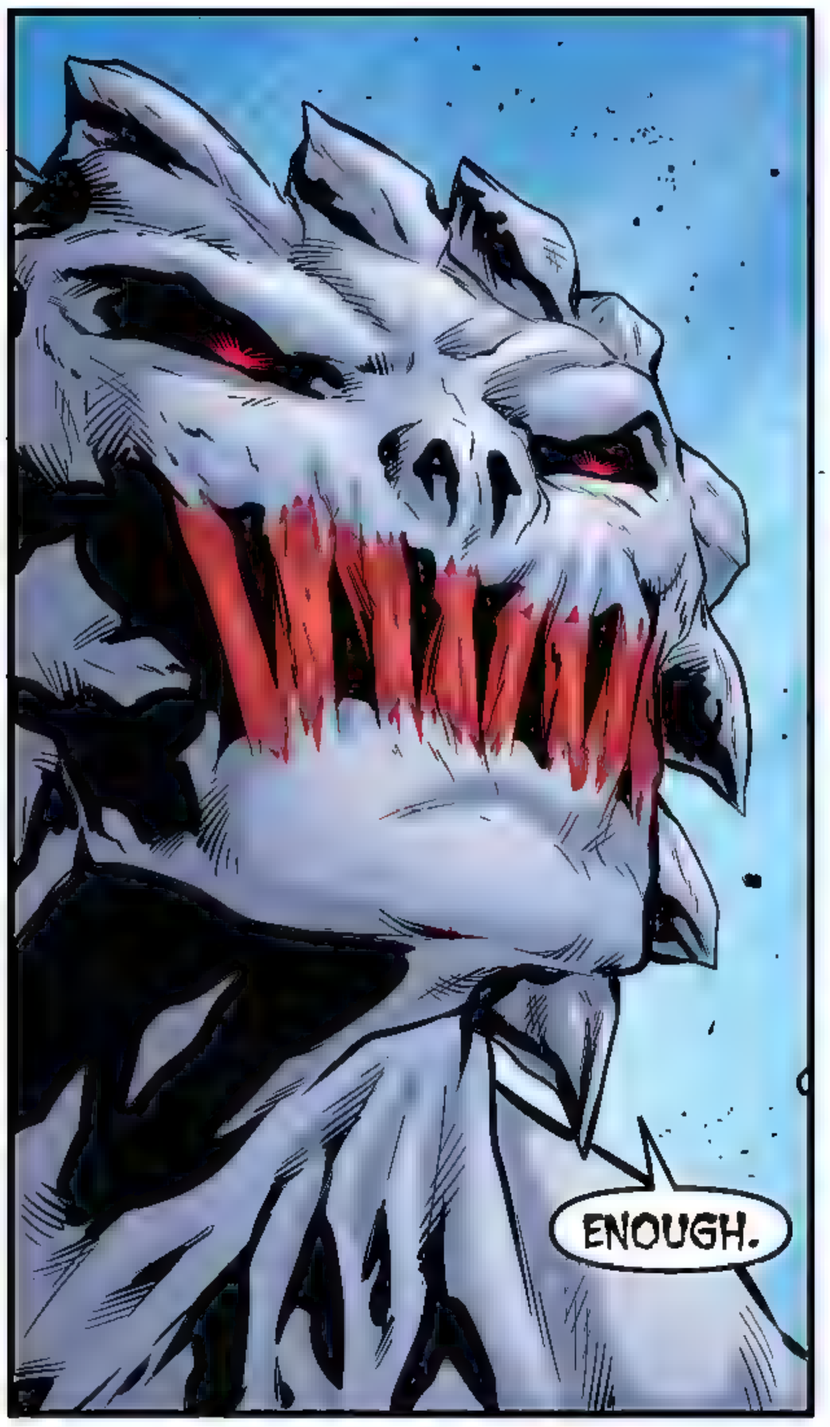
IT'S OVER, ARCHAEUS. THEY'VE ALL LEFT YOU.

YOU'RE *ALONE* NOW.

YOU WANTED TO SURROUND YOURSELF WITH *FAMILY* BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD MAKE YOU *POWERFUL.*

BUT YOU'VE DONE EVERYTHING WRONG. YOUR *MOTIVATIONS* GUARANTEED YOU'D FAIL BEFORE YOU EVEN GOT STARTED.

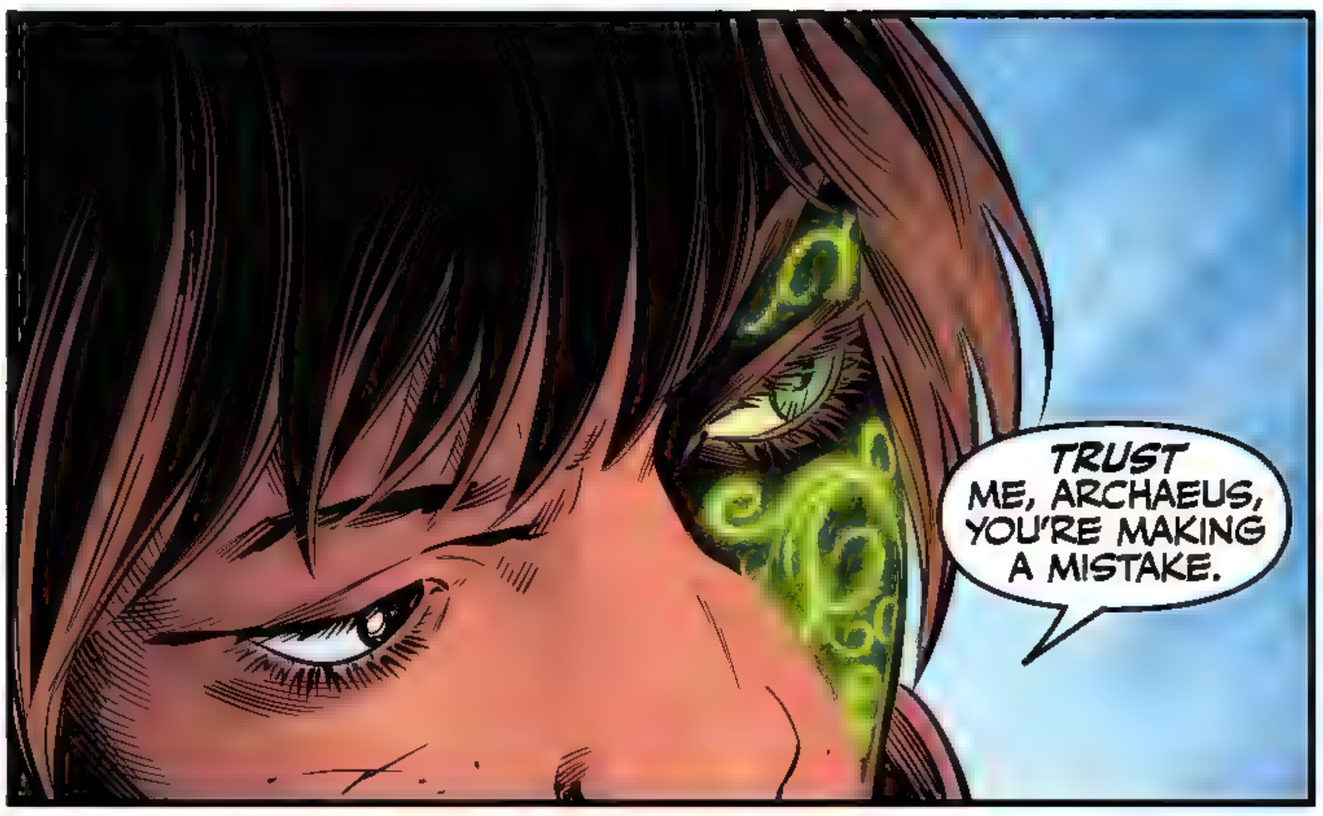
FAMILY ISN'T SOMETHING YOU MANUFACTURE.

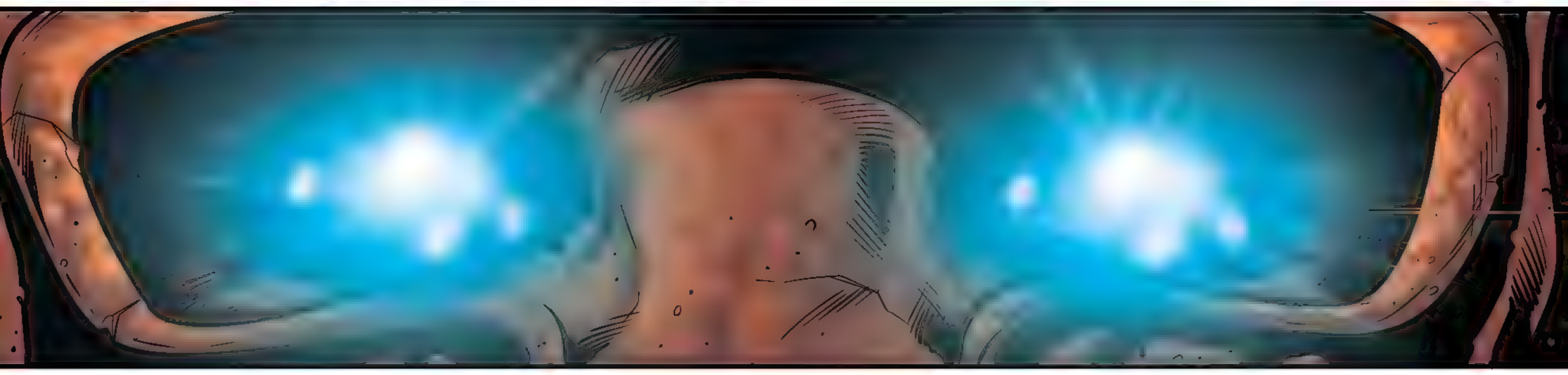

ENOUGH.

YOU DO NOT LECTURE ME.
=GASP=

I DON'T KNOW WHAT LITTLE VICTORY YOU *THINK* YOU'VE ACHIEVED. YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU'D COME THROUGH THIS UNSCATHED, DID YOU? THAT THERE WOULDN'T BE A PRICE?
I AM THE DEMON LORD ARCHAEUS, AND I CAN TURN YOUR WORLD TO *PAIN.*
I WILL START WITH *THIS* LITTLE ONE.

DON'T EVEN--
WAIT!


TRUST ME, ARCHAEUS, YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE.



ZZZMMMMMM

ZMMM

NO! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

WHUM

WHUM

WHUM

DON'T YOU *KNOW,* ARCHAEUS?

YOU ARE A DEMON LORD, ANCIENT AND POWERFUL. BUT THIS IS PURE MAGIC. IT'S SOMETHING MORE THAN YOU COULD *EVER* BE.

PLEASE. PLEASE!

I WONDER IF YOU *UNDERSTAND* NOW.

I WONDER IF IT'S *POSSIBLE* FOR YOU TO CONCEIVE WHAT I'VE KEPT AT BAY THIS WHOLE TIME. THE RAW POWER I'VE HARBORED AND NOURISHED AND GUIDED SO IT WOULDN'T UNLEASH ITSELF ON THE WORLD.

ARRRGH

THE MAGIC IS LIKE A CHILD, ARCHAEUS. CHILDREN ARE *SMART.*

TOO MANY PEOPLE TALK DOWN TO CHILDREN IN THIS WORLD. AND THEY ALWAYS LEARN THE SAME LESSON.

ZMMM

WHUM

WHUM

UH, NADIRA?! CARE TO NARRATE?

THE MAGIC IS RETURNING ARCHAEUS'S GIFT.

SSSSSSSSS

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

IT'S SEALED.

IS HE... IS ARCHAEUS TRAPPED IN THERE?

SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM IN A THOUSAND YEARS.

THEN IT'S OVER.

LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER W FOR TEAM AWESOME.

PERHAPS. BUT ARCHAEUS WAS CORRECT ABOUT ONE THING.

WE DID NOT COME THROUGH THIS UNSCATHED.

PARKER...

LATER

FAITH'S APARTMENT BUILDING.

MR. ANGEL. A MOMENT?

RORY?

I WANTED TO CATCH YOU BEFORE YOU WENT UP TO SEE MISS FAITH AND THE OTHERS.

I JUST WANTED TO SAY *THANKS.* NOT JUST FROM ME. ALL THE BOYS BACK AT THE PUB FEEL THE SAME WAY. I MEAN, YEAH, YOU THUMP THEM NOW AND THEN WHEN THEY GET TOO ROWDY, BUT YOU'RE ONE OF *US.* AND THERE'S A LOT OF *THEM* OUT THERE IF YOU TAKE MY MEANING.

IT JUST WOULDN'T BE *MAGIC TOWN* WITHOUT YOU AND FAITH, AND MR. KOH, AND THE REST.

RORY. IT'S ME THAT SHOULD BE THANKING YOU. *ALL* OF YOU.

YEAH... WELL...

ANYWAY, YOU'LL FIND THEM ON THE ROOF.

THE CASE OF BODDINGTONS IS MY CONTRIBUTION.

YOU GOT STUCK WITH GRILL DUTY, HUH?

AT TWELVE YEARS, A NITOBE IS SENT INTO THE WILDERNESS WITH ONLY A SMALL KNIFE TO HUNT. UPON RETURN, HE SKINS AND ROASTS THE KILL IN A FEAST FOR THE ENTIRE CLAN.

THOSE WOULD APPEAR TO BE BURGERS PURCHASED AT THE LOCAL MARKET.

PERHAPS YOUR PATTY GETS DROPPED ON THE FLOOR.

IT'S JUST POTATO SALAD. I MADE IT MYSELF.

OH, DARLING. *STRAIGHT* TO THE THIGHS.

OKAY IF I JOIN YOUR CONVERSATION?

JOIN. CONVERSE.

SO. QUESTIONS. WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

YOU WERE RIGHT, NADIRA. HE *CAN'T* RELAX.

TOLD YOU.

RELAX? I CAN RELAX.

I'LL RELAX MORE THAN ANYONE HERE.

HERE, JUST TAKE ONE OF THESE BEFORE YOU *SPRAIN* YOURSELF RELAXING SO HARD.

YEAH. I GUESS IT'S JUST HARD BEING *OFF DUTY*, YOU KNOW?

WELL, SWITCH OFF BEFORE YOU MAKE YOURSELF NUTS.

LISTEN TO THE WOMAN, ANGEL.

BEFORE YOU START HARSHING *MY* MELLOW.

YOU SEEM PRETTY JOVIAL. CONSIDERING.

CONSIDERING WHAT?

CONSIDERING WE HAVE A MAGICAL ENTITY OUT THERE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TRAP A ***DEMON LORD*** AND WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MIGHT DO NEXT.

WHAT DID WE *JUST* SAY ABOUT RELAXING?

IT'S OKAY. I'LL ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, ANGEL.

I STILL FEEL THE BOND WITH THE MAGIC, BUT IT'S...DISTANT.

AN *ECHO* OF WHAT IT WAS BEFORE.

IT'S ALMOST LIKE THE MAGIC HAS FOUND A QUIET SPOT TO BE ALONE AND THINK.

BEEN THERE.

I *MADE* IT.

EXPLAIN TO ME *MAYONNAISE.*

OKAY. HIBERNATING MAGIC. WHATEVER. NOT GOING TO DWELL ON IT. AT LEAST NOT TONIGHT.

IT'S JUST LUCKY THE MAGIC DECIDED TO BE ON *OUR* SIDE.

LUCK? DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT, ANGEL?

YOU SHOWED THE MAGIC WHAT FAMILY MEANS. YOU *PROVIDE* FOR A FAMILY. *PROTECT* THEM. IT'S ABOUT GIVING.

TO ARCHAEUS, A FAMILY WAS JUST A RESOURCE TO BE *EXPLOITED.*

LET *THAT* SINK IN WHILE I GET ANOTHER BEER.

HUH. HOW ABOUT THAT?

SO. YOU LEFT. YOU CAME BACK. ARE YOU OFF AGAIN NOW?

I DON'T THINK THE INTROSPECTIVE WALKABOUT IS REALLY MY SCENE.

WHAT *IS* YOUR SCENE?

THIS. NOW. WITH THESE PEOPLE.

WELL. THAT'S GOOD.

YES. ABSOLUTELY.

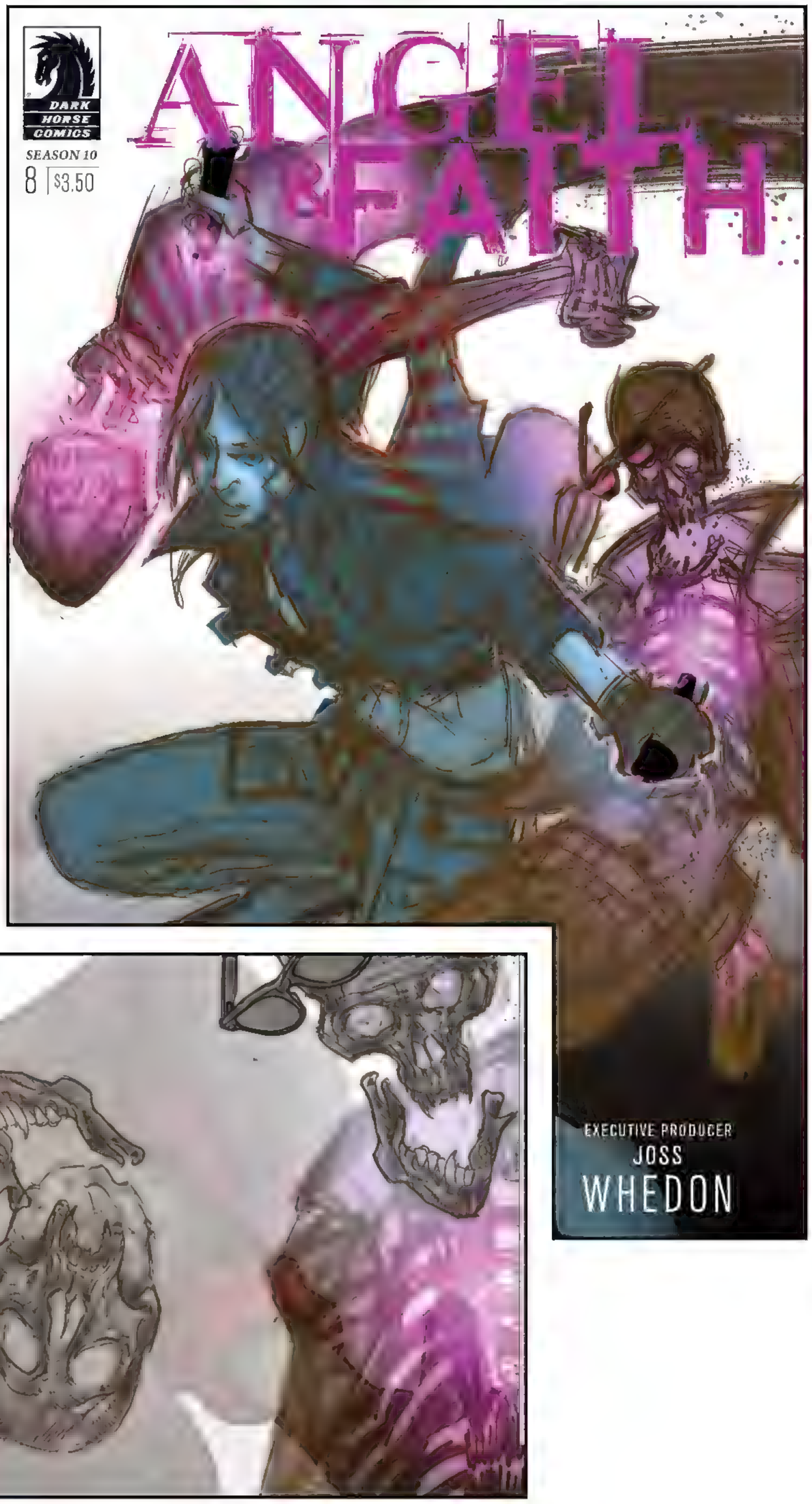
KLINK

THE END

ANGEL & FAITH™

SKETCHBOOK and COVER GALLERY

Scott Fischer's issue #21 cover art focused on Faith. Shown on these two pages are Scott's initial cover sketch and some in-progress images of the final cover. Final issue #21 cover art is shown on page 6 of this volume.



Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #21, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen. An homage to *Family Feud*—do you know how to play the game?

Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #22, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen. A happy demon family—with matching sweaters—Archaeus, Drusilla, and Angel(us).

For Scott Fischer's issue #22 cover, he showed a picture of the past with Drusilla and Angel, when they really were more like a family. Here are his initial cover sketch and a detail of the painted frame he created. Final issue #22 cover art is shown on page 30 of this volume.

Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #23, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen.

The process of creating two dynamic cover sketches is shown here with Scott Fischer's initial work for the issue #23 cover featuring Faith, Fred, and Eldre Koh. Also on these pages are the two cover sketches he ultimately provided and the cover in progress. To see the final cover art for this issue, see page 54 of this volume.

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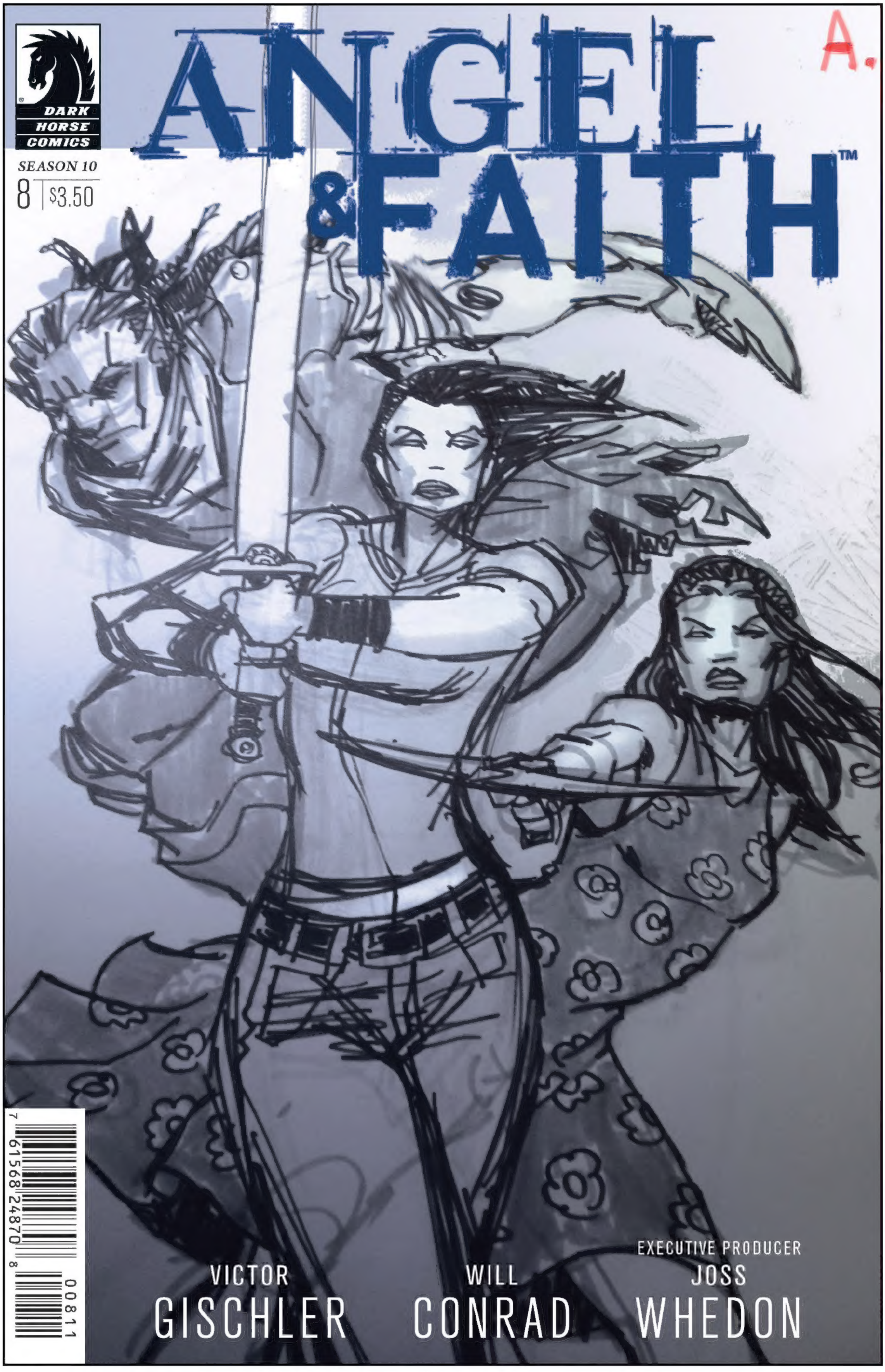

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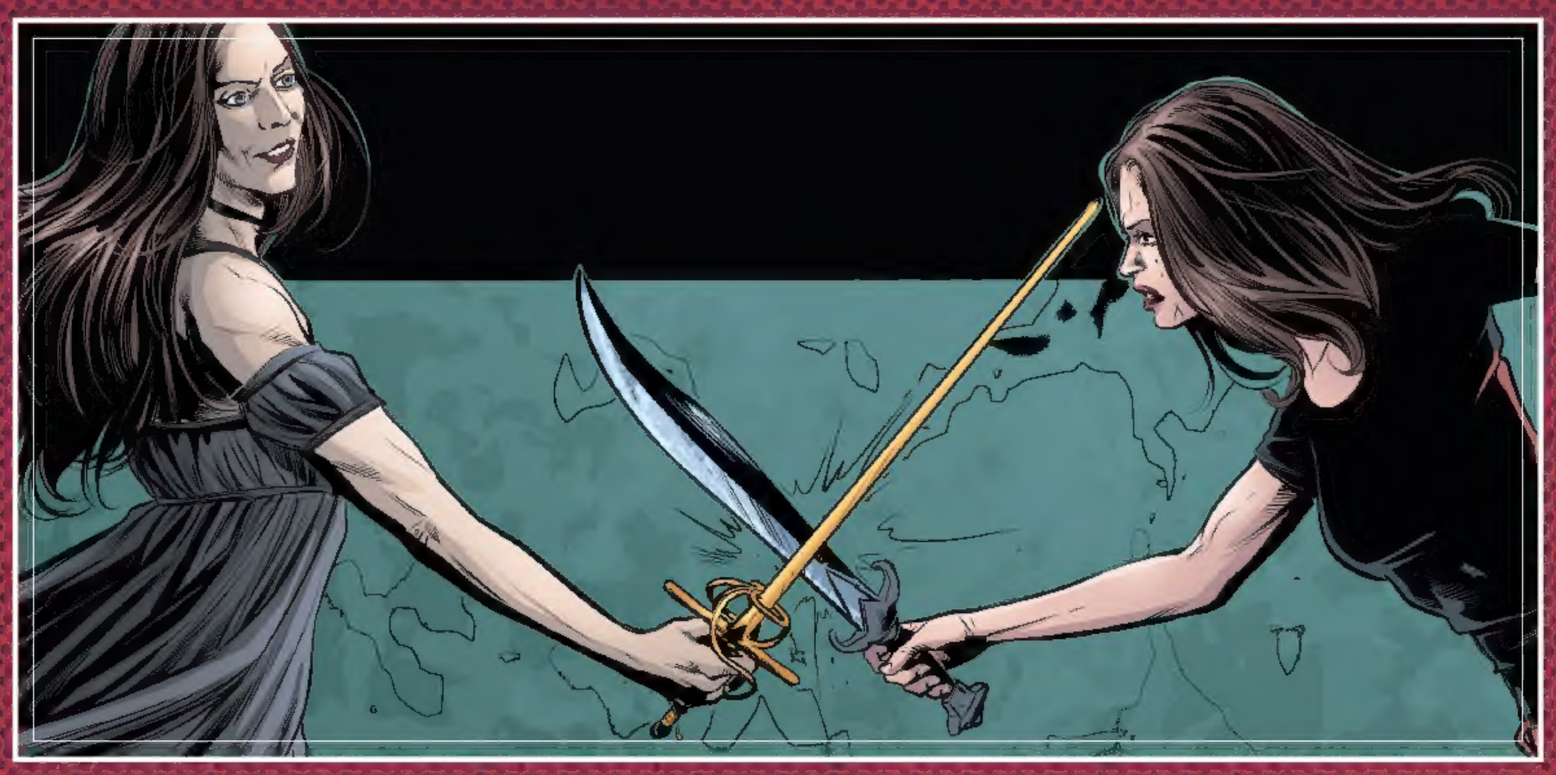
Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #24, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen.

"ALWAYS A JOY TO READ AND ALWAYS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED."

–SCIFIPULSE



ANGEL *and* FAITH

SEASON 10

VOLUME 5: A TALE of TWO FAMILIES

With gangs of vampires bringing trouble to the streets of Magic Town, Angel and Faith have their work cut out for them—not only protecting the citizens from the vampire terrorists but also dealing with the source of the trouble: Drusilla and the überdemon Archaeus. Having failed to gather Angel and Spike to his side, Archaeus is building his family with Dru and looking for a way to gain true control of Magic Town through Nadira and her magic . . . Angel, Faith, Fred and Illyria, and Koh pit their newly formed family against Archaeus's brood of blood and misguided magic in a battle for London . . .

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